



GIPSA *news*

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GRAIN INSPECTION, PACKERS AND STOCKYARDS ADMINISTRATION EMPLOYEES

JANUARY 2015

Information Technology Updates

Daniel Knight Washington, DC

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This past year has been very challenging and productive for GIPSA IT. We have complied with several Departmental Blueprints for Stronger Service & Promoting Efficient Spending initiatives. These initiatives are also linked to President's Obama's 25 Point Implementation Plan to Reform Federal Information Technology Management.



GIPSA has also created three Inter Agency Agreements (IAA), Telecommunication billing services, server/network management and computer image management. We are still fine tuning the Service Level Agreements (SLA) to enhance the service and to ensure all are accountable for service performance. I know we still have a long way to go to ensure staff have the best IT services available. Also I acknowledge we have gaps in coverage after hours and for locations that do not have IT staff at their location. We are also building into our budget funds for quarterly site visits to address all outstanding service items. We will start scheduling trips in January.

Below is a list of the USDA and Interagency Shared Services initiatives that we have implemented:

- Data Center Consolidation
- Tier 1 Help Desk Consolidated Contract,
- Microsoft Antivirus Software & Departmental Security Array
- USDA Cellular Acquisition & Consolidated Cell Phone Plans
- AT&T Managed Services, Enterprise Active Directory (EAD)
- Enterprise Virtual Private Network (EVPN)
- Enterprise Application Services (EAS) for application development
- File and Print Server Management
- Network upgrade and management for the National Grain Center
- Computer Image Process Management
- Telecommunication Billing Support Services

GIPSA has been able to reduce IT spending annually and has been able to reinvest this cost savings in additional support services and new technologies.

Before I forget, I want to thank all of you for helping GIPSA increase its LincPass us-

Continued, see IT on page 2.

IT from cover page

age. The goal is 100percent and we are getting closer!0

Below list some of the projects we are working on currently:

- Replacement of Blackberry mobile devices with a Windows smartphones
- Upgrading bandwidth at PSP ERO Atlanta, WRO Denver, MRO Des Moines and FGIS New Orleans
- Upgrading phone system to AT&T Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) phones in ERO Atlanta, WRO Denver, FGIS Portland and League City
- FGISonline Service Portal
- Upgrade and network hardware at the FGIS National Grain Center
- Lifecycle replacement of 150 computers and tablets
- Updating all IT investment Capital Planning and Investment Control (CPIC) data
- Proof of Concept for new PSP case management and workflow system
- Enhancing the Tier1 Helpdesk service and the use of the Remedy ticketing system

Federal Viewpoint Survey and Best Places to Work

The Partnership for Public Service released the 2014 Best Places to Work Rankings. USDA moved up in the rankings – from 16th of 19 large agencies in 2013 to 13th in the 2014 rankings. Thank you for taking the time to respond to the Federal Viewpoint Survey and all of your hard work to improve employee engagement that made this possible. Please continue supporting and attending the employee engagement Real Talk Sessions because they can make a difference.

GIPSA also moved up in the rankings. Out of 315 agency subcomponents (government-wide) **GIPSA Ranked 98th**. Last year we ranked 154th out of 300 government-wide agencies. That is a great improvement!

USDA's goal is to move up into the top 10 over the next few years, and we are on our way. These numbers are meaningful because they tell us that the workplace is improving for employees.

Your work is important and you are appreciated. Thank you for all your efforts.

You can find out more about “Best Places to Work” at <http://bestplacestowork.org/BPTW/index.php>



Under Secretary Avalos visits the Grand Forks Field Office



Front (L-R): Fred Lindseth, Mary Knutson, Carmon Lindblad, Valerie Hills
Back (L-R): Andy Otto, Ed Stallman, Sanah Baig, Under Secretary Avalos, Penny Kilbride

On Monday, December 8th, the Grand Forks Field Office had the privilege of a visit from Under Secretary Edward Avalos and his Confidential Assistant, Sanah Baig. After a short discussion on what the Grand Forks office's role is within the Federal Grain Inspection Service, we gave Mr. Avalos and Ms. Baig a tour of the office and introduced them to the individuals who were present.

After the tour, we adjourned to the conference room for a pizza luncheon and conversation. After lunch, Mr. Avalos took time to answer questions from the Field Office staff. We took a quick photo op and bid the Under Secretary and his aide good-bye.

FGIS Matters....!

Randall Jones, Washington ,DC



2015 Budget Approved. We have great news regarding our budget as Congress has passed and the President has signed our FY15 budget. The funding levels for our Program will be very similar to FY14.

FGIS as the Gold Standard for Grain Inspection. For more than three decades our Program has been recognized in the U.S. and around the world as the Gold Standard for grain inspection. During this fiscal year the Executive Management Team has established a strategic initiative that will sharpen our focus on the following to ensure they meet this standard: quality of work, professional delivery of services, and work environment.

A key component of this is the professional appearance of staff and I am proud that this year will reestablish the clothing program for many of our field office staff that provide services to our customers daily. Bob Lijewski, Director, Field Management Division, and his team are feverishly working to rollout the uniform program in early 2015.

Our work environment has a huge impact on our staff and how we are viewed as an organization. Labs must be clean, neat and professional in appearance. It is up to each of us to take pride in our surroundings and commit on a daily basis to making sure that our work space is well organized, clean and professional in appearance.

The Executive Management Team is committed to creating an atmosphere that facilitates the work that we do. To that end, we will closely analyze the manner in which we handle and maintain data in our labs. Our goal is very simple - throw out the pencils, pan tickets, and calculators and have the data seamlessly flow through the lab, onto inspection certificates, into reports and to our customers. There will be a day in which we no longer are required to manually enter data through key punch into the computer. This day may be a few years away but we must embrace the challenge and develop our information technology systems to meet our needs for the future.

USA Rice Outlook Conference. On December 7 - 9, FGIS participated in the USA Rice Outlook Conference in Little Rock, Arkansas. I, along with a few members of the management team from FMD and TSD, met with USA Rice Federation staff members and the USA Rice Millers' Association Industry Standards Committee in a breakout session and discussed current items of interest. I am very happy to report that we have an outstanding working relationship with this group and as a result do not have any significant pending issues. We also had a booth at which we demonstrated the current state of our new technology that allows for us to measure broken kernels of rice using automation. The industry response has been very enthusiastic and we hope to have this process in use by the end of this coming summer.

Central American Rice Millers Association. On December 11 and 12, Byron Reilly, Director, Departmental Initiatives and International Affairs, participated in the meeting of the Board of Directors, Central American Rice Millers Association. Participants were able to interact with U.S. Rice Importers and discuss market needs. The Rice Studio Scanner was also demonstrated and met with great interest.

Visit to New Orleans Field Office. On December 17 - 18, **Mr. Lijewski** and I visited the New Orleans Field Office and met with all of the Shift Supervisors and management officials. Our discussion focused on the important role that 1st line supervisors serve in managing staff and delivery of services.

Signature Process Improvement. We are into the second month of our Signature Process Improvement Project. The Secretary has challenged each agency to look at a process within their agency that could be improved upon and made more efficient. Our SPI is focused on improving the process for communicating and updating current program policy and guidance to official inspection personnel and to stakeholders with a goal to improve the timeliness and accuracy of the

Continued, see FGIS on page 4.

FGIS from page 3

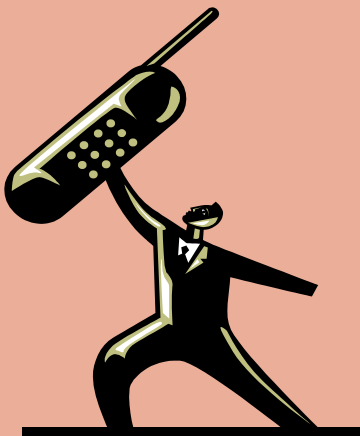
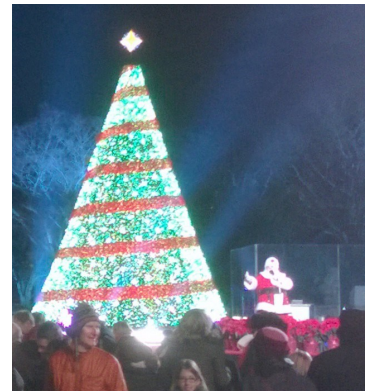
information.

Mentoring Program & Leadership Development. Our Program is strong because of the talent of our staff and we focus much time and energy into developing this talent. One of our primary tools is the mentoring program which is a great opportunity for staff to gain external awareness, develop others, and develop goals. Another tool are the leadership development programs - Aspiring Leader Program, New Leader Program, and Executive Leadership Program. It is through these programs that we will ensure the viability and strength of our organization into the future. I want to commend all of the participants of these programs for their commitment to improving themselves and striving for improvement.

Until next time, keep up the good work and stay safe!

National Christmas Tree Lighting on the White House Ellipse

On December 4, 2014, GIPSA team members, Kendra Kline, Eric Jabs and Jesse Grelle, were recipients of some holiday spirit! Our very own Deputy Under Secretary for MRP, Elvis Cordova, was able to provide us with last minute tickets to the National Christmas Tree Lighting on the White House Ellipse at President's Park. Notable guests and entertainers included; the First Family, Tom Hanks, NE-YO, and Steve Miller, to mention a few. The event was a joyous experience that we will never forget and so on behalf of GIPSA, we want to sincerely thank Mr. Cordova and wish him and his family a wonderful holiday season.



GIPSA Idea Hotline

GIPSA Idea Hotline is open for business.

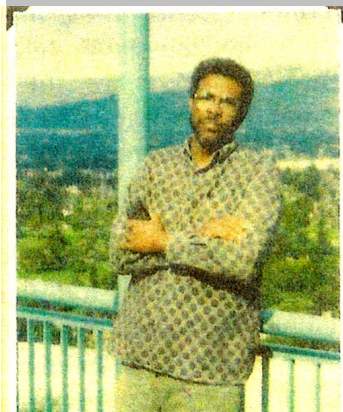
Please send your suggestions or ideas to

GIPSA-Ideas@usda.gov; fax them to **202-690-2173**; or
telephone them to **1-800-455-3447** or **202-720-7045**.

It is best to send them via fax or email to reduce the possibility of transcription errors; however, ideas will be accepted regardless of the method of transmission.

Names in the News

Condolences



Carl Edward Tutt, Agricultural Commodity Grader for the League City Field Office, passed away December 14, 2014. Carl worked for FGIS with over 35 years of grading experience and was known very well at the FGIS Gulf Rice Mill. Carl Tutts passing leaves a deep void in many people's lives as he was still a son to Louise, a husband to Dollie, a father to his four children and a grandfather to his four grandchildren. Carl Tutt was a Vietnam Veteran, a graduate of Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana and an active member of the Community Christian Fellowship.

Carl's Celebration of Life (Funeral Service) was held ; Saturday, December 20, 2014 at the Earthman Res-haven Funeral Home, 13102 North Freeway, Houston, Texas 77060.

Retirement

Gary Lee Erskine, Supervisory Agricultural Commodity Grader (Grain) and Quality Assurance Specialist, will retire January 3, 2015, with 37 years of service. Gary started out with FGIS in 1977 as a grader in Fort Worth, Texas, he later worked his way up to become a senior inspector in Galveston, Texas providing training / instructions to ACG's, ACA and ACT's on GIPSA grain program. Later in his years with the agency he became the Quality Assurance Specialist for the League City Field Office. He plans to enjoy his retirement years with his family and hunting deer during hunting season.

**37
YEARS**

**21.5
YEARS**

Glennon S. Diket, Supervisory Agricultural Commodity Grader (Grain) retired December 31, 2014, with 21.5 years of Service. Glen started out with FGIS in 1977 as an Intermittent Agricultural Commodity Aid in Belle Chasse, Louisiana. He worked his way up to become an Agricultural Commodity Grader in the League City Field Office, League City, Texas. He plans to spend his retirement years traveling.

Ted Respet is retiring on January 2, 2015, with 40 years of federal service. Ted began his career with the Federal Government in Grand Forks, North Dakota He then transferred to the Baltimore Field Office. He volunteered to take a permanent position as shift supervisor in Port Cartier, Quebec. When permanent staffing was eliminated in Port Cartier, Ted moved to the Indianapolis Field office working as Assistant Manager. Upon the closing of the Indianapolis office, Ted accepted the position of Officer in Charge in the Duluth sub office and then Assistant Manager of the Minneapolis Field Office. When the Minneapolis office closed Ted accepted a position as Compliance Officer with FGIS's Investigations and Regulatory Branch. Over his career Ted has travelled on behalf of FGIS to Mexico, Central America, South America, Asia, Africa, and Canada.

**40
YEARS**

**41.5
YEARS**

Glenda Lasseigne, Administrative Officer in the GIPSA New Orleans Field Office retired January 3, 2015, with 41 ½ years of service. She began her federal career in 1973 with the Federal Highway Administration in Baton Rouge as a GS-2 clerk-typist. She joined the newly formed Federal Grain Inspection Service in October 1976 when a new field office opened up in her hometown of Litcher, Louisiana. She started as a GS-4 head clerk in the Litcher Field Office and will be ending her career as the Administrative Officer in the New Orleans Field Office. One of the many accomplishments she is most proud of was assisting with the upgrades of the field office clerical staff. She had considerable input with helping write the position descriptions for the certification assistants and supervisory certification assistants.

In her retirement, Glenda plans on traveling and spending time with her family, especially her granddaughter Leah.

Names in the News (continued)

Retirement

18.5 YEARS

Bernadine Turley retired December 31, 2014, with 18 ½ years of federal service. Ms. Turley joined FGIS as a GS-3 intermittent employee in September 1995. She converted to a full-time seasonal employee and then became a permanent full-time Agricultural Commodity Technician GS-6.

Bernadine's retirement plans include spending time with her two children and 4 grandchildren. She plans on volunteering her services at the Senior Citizen Center in Lutchter.

35 years of Service

Terri Henry, Management Analyst was presented with a certificate and pin for 35 years of Service with the United States Government



10 years of Service

Lisa Fyall, Supervisory Management Analyst was presented with a certificate and pin for 10 years of Service with the United States Government



2014 GIPSA Administrator's Awards Recipients

Category	Winner
Distinguished Individual	Karen Collins
Superior Individual	Wayne Basford
Distinguished Group	TSD UGMA Moisture Meter Team (Brian Adam, Rodney Bell, Kerry Camp, Donald Damm, Alan Disch, George Dumun, Patricia Emick, Eric Jabs, Martha Liberty, Joseph Lopez, Sara Ludwig, Flora Musser, and Greg Zieber)
Superior Group	Portland FO Columbia Export (Robert B. Amhold, Bob A. Baker, David L. Ballard, Brent R. Carpenter, Odilon H. Carranza, Eric G. Chadwick, John R. Charmely Jr., Cleve C. Ellis, Steve S. Everidge, Jesse W. Grelle, Kim H. Harper, Ryan S. Heath, Chad T. Johnson, Stephen J. Justice, Jeffery R. Lahaie, Jack D. Main Jr., Robert E. May, Richard D. McCaw, Sean M. McMillen, Julia A. Michel, Daniel G. Nodine, Luther D. Nunn, Joseph A. Olson, Jimmy N. Pan, John C. Rasmusen, Frank Sainz, Heather R. Schlecht, John M. Schoonover, Jens P. Soballe, Joseph W. Sparks, Thomas M. Webb, John B. Wilson III, Brian E. Zarek)
Safety	Mark Kemp, Kenneth Miller, Richard Holman
EEO & CRS	Linda Alston
Non- GIPSA Support	Barry Arnold



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

Civil Rights Policy Statement

As Secretary, I have made it my priority to ensure that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has a comprehensive civil rights program, one which not only makes us a model employer, but also a premier service provider to our millions of customers. This year, we have made many strides toward moving USDA in this direction. Our non-discrimination regulation for our conducted programs now adds protection from discrimination with respect to two new protected bases: political beliefs and gender identity. In addition, we have issued a Departmental Regulation that prohibits national origin discrimination affecting Persons with Limited English Proficiency in Programs and Activities Conducted by USDA. Further, the total number of equal employment opportunity complaints filed by USDA employees has dropped significantly. These accomplishments alone demonstrate our commitment and progress, but we will not stop here.

I challenge all USDA employees to dedicate themselves to improving civil rights in a transparent and ethical manner, and by doing so, we will turn the challenges of the past into opportunities for the future.

Our policy at USDA is zero tolerance for any form of discrimination, and we must ensure that this standard is maintained throughout the Department. This standard is applicable to every employee and manager and to every action taken at USDA. I expect all employees to demonstrate respect for and adherence to USDA civil rights and diversity policies. Moving USDA into the future has required a cultural transformation within the Department. For this reason, I have continually communicated this goal to all USDA employees.

I will continue to hold all employees and managers accountable for doing their part to ensure that all USDA applicants, customers, constituents, and stakeholders are provided equal access to all opportunities, programs, and services available through "The People's Department." Accordingly, I am counting on all senior leaders, managers, and supervisors to model appropriate behavior and to lead by example.

We have corrected past errors and will continue to move forward to maintain equitable service and access for all. Let us continue to cultivate and reap the benefits of a diverse USDA workforce that is rich in talent, ideas, background, and experience. The USDA mission depends on it.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Tom Vilsack", written over a circular official seal.

Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary

NOV 12 2014

PSP Change Control Working Group (CCWG)

As we welcome in the New Year, the CCWG welcomes its newly elected officers. The CCWG also extends a big thanks to the 2014 Chair, Wayne Basford (ERO) and Vice-Chair, Marilynn Gallagher (WRO), for all of their hard work and dedication to the CCWG team. They both contributed greatly to the team's mission!

The newly elected Chair for 2015 is Caleb Bott. Caleb is a Senior Marketing Specialist in the Western Regional Office and began his CCWG term in January 2014. Caleb grew up on a cattle ranch and alfalfa farm in Utah and has a passion for agriculture. In his spare time, he enjoys being outdoors, traveling, and spending time with his family. He is the proud father of two young boys and he and his wife are expecting a baby girl in January. Caleb has an MBA with an emphasis in Food and International Agribusiness from the Royal Agricultural University in Cirencester, England and a Master's of Science in Applied Economics with an emphasis in Agricultural Economics from Utah State University. Caleb enjoys serving on the CCWG and is dedicated to improving our workplace. He looks forward to serving in his new position as Chair and encourages all P&SP employees to submit their ideas for change to the CCWG.



Some responsibilities of the Chair include: coordinating and initiating CCWG meetings, providing agendas for CCWG and PMT meetings, serving as the Program Management Team (PMT) point of contact, and requesting additional information that may be required for the consideration of a Change Request.

The newly elected Vice-Chair is Mallory Wagoner. Mallory is the Eastern Nebraska Resident Agent for the Midwestern Regional Office, and began her CCWG term in January 2014. Mallory grew up on a cattle ranch in the sand hills of Nebraska and resides in Columbus, Nebraska with her husband and one daughter. Mallory has a Bachelor's degree in Animal Science from South Dakota State University and has been with the P&SP for over 4 ½ years. Mallory is excited about her new role as Vice Chair and looks forward to learning more about the CCWG workflow process and working directly on Change Requests.

Responsibilities of the Vice-Chair include: Monitoring and updating Change Requests within ECM, determining whether Change Requests are within the scope of CCWG, initiating and maintaining workflows, and recording the Minutes of CCWG meetings.

A Shout-Out Goes to...

A shout out goes to all GIPSA employees who assisted in whatever way to process the Agency's FY 2014 FOIA requests. I want to extend my thanks and appreciation to all of you for taking the time out of your busy days to locate the responsive records, to copy them to FOIA folders, and/or to answer my questions regarding the records. In any event, I couldn't have completed my review and processing of the records without YOU. GIPSA's FY 2014 annual FOIA report reflected that we began FY 2014 with 2 requests pending; we received 36 requests during the fiscal year and completed 37, ending FY 2014 with 1 request pending. Regarding FOIA appeals, GIPSA received 3 during the fiscal year, 1 appeal was completed, leaving 2 appeals pending at the end of FY 2014. Thank you, again, for the assistance you provided in my administration of GIPSA's FOIA program.....Joanne Peterson

Special thanks to our NGC facilitators and co-facilitators; Justin Tone-Pah-Hote, Steven Burton, Valerie Collins, Ajit Ghosh, Jennifer Helber, April Johnson, and Greg Zieber. Our team is grateful for the assistance of Ramaswamy Mani and Ganga Murthy who assisted with the launch of team initiatives.

~Justin Tone-Pah-Hote

The National Grain Center (NGC) Report

NGC Administrator Award Winners

2014 Administrator Award Distinguished Group Recipients



Front Row: Patricia Emick; Donald Damm; Timothy Humiston; Kerry Camp; Shelley Musser

Back Row: Eric Jabs; Alan Disch; Brian Adam; Rodney Bell; George Dumun; Greg Zieber

Not Pictured: Martha Liberty; Joseph Lopez; Sara Ludwig

NGC Hosts Collegiate Crops Contest

For the second year, the National Grain Center hosted the 81st annual Kansas City Collegiate Crops Contest. The contests held in Kansas City and Chicago represent the national finals of collegiate crops competition for the year. GIPSA provides the grain grading samples for the contest in both cities.

Each university team consists of three undergraduate students and a faculty support coach. Preparation for crops contests teaches students the evaluation of crops for quality relative to certification, viability and marketing. Students learn many things, which can be valuable regardless of their chosen profession in agronomy.

The National Crops Judging Contest consists of three parts: plant and seed identification, commercial grain grading, and seed analysis. Contestants have one and one-half hours to complete each section.

This year teams from the University of Wisconsin (Platteville), Kansas State University, South Dakota State University, Oklahoma State University, and Virginia Tech competed in the Kansas City event. First place in the 2014 event went to the team from Kansas State University. The teams from Wisconsin and Virginia finished second and third respectively.



Justin Tone-Pah-Hote explains the functions of the Trace Analysis lab to the crop contest participants.



Collegiate crop contestants identifying plants and seeds on the right and on the left grading samples and analyzing seeds.

The National Grain Center (NGC) Report (cont.)

Fire Drill



The NGC conducted a successful fire drill December 2nd (yes it was cold!!!). Thanks to everyone's cooperation and help in various ways we learned some things that we'll try to improve upon so we are better prepared if we ever do encounter an actual fire here.

No, that's not Joe Lopez, it's a fire blocking one of the exists forcing employees to use a secondary escape route.

The National Grain Center's Employee Engagement Team

The Employee Engagement Team was excited to hear that both USDA and GIPSA improved in rankings in the 2014 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS). The team is focused on providing solutions and continuing actions that lead to an overall satisfaction for the working environment at the National Grain Center. Since the team was formed ten months ago, significant programs have been created, with respect to improving the NGC. This includes the launch of a more effective Individual Development Plan (IDP) process, communication training, on-site Excel and Access training for all NGC staff, quarterly branch meetings with Director Alonzo, the NGC "Meet Your Neighbor" events, a "From the NGC" section in the GIPSA newsletter, and briefings around GIPSA's Strategic plan and various health and safety topics. Some future items being considered include employee recognitions, and instructional briefings around the USAjobs application process--and also the EEO critical element. Each one of the Technology and Science Division branches' has been asked to develop an initiative, so there may be a few more items launched later in the fiscal year! We hope these initiatives show everyone that awesome changes can come out of the FEVS survey results!



A critical upcoming event is going to occur next month. The Employee Engagement Teams are launching their second series of "Real Talk Sessions" to be held during the month of January. We hope all invited employees will attend, as we examine benefits of launched initiatives, discuss issues, and generate more employee-driven solutions to make the USDA and GIPSA an even better workplace.

The National Grain Center (NGC) Report (cont.)

NGC Christmas Party

This year's Holiday Celebration theme was *"A Red, White, and Blue Christmas."* The theme was in conjunction with the fundraiser event organized by Terri Liberty and Ruth Goff to raise money for the VA Volunteer Services of Kansas City. This service helps by giving soldiers and their families in need grocery or gas gift cards. And NGC, once again, has shown their heart for giving by raising over \$320.00 for our U.S. soldiers. We had an *"Ugly Sweater"* contest, bake sales, popcorn sales, and individuals provided gift cards made monetary donations. We want to say "Thank You, Thank You" and know that it took an NGC team effort to accomplish this.

We also had a "Decorate your Door" contest. And you say "what if I don't have a door" no problem.....just improvise. It was awesome to see the fun and creativity flowing. Below are the winners:



First Prize - Large Group - FMD
"Caroling Snowmen"



First Prize - Small Group -
Commodity Testing & Reference Labs
"Light a Candle for a Soldier"



Second Prize - Small Group
Commodity Testing & Reference Labs
"A Soldier is a Gift"



Honorable Mentions
(left: IT Group *"Santa & His Reindeer"*;
bottom: BAR/GSL *"Bows on the Cubes"*)



**If you would like to make a contribution to "The
National Grain Center (NGC) Report"**

**please send information to Roger Friedrich, Leader,
GIPSA, Digital Media Group**

roger.l.friedrich@usda.gov

**NGC
Report**

GIPSA 2014 New Leader Program

Stephanie Feinberg, Washington, DC

If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.— John Quincy Adams

From August 2014 to February 2015 - Nine competitively selected GIPSA employees are attending the Graduate School's New Leader Program. This is a developmental program that offers personal assessments, experiential learning, and individual developmental opportunities. This program supports GIPSA's succession planning in recognition of the high rate of potential retirements and that employees will need to take on new leadership roles.



Pictured: Brian Zarek, George Duman, George Banks Jr, Jeani Plautz, Stephanie Feinberg, Shane Minden, Ron Bundy, Jesse Grelle, and Courtney Trask at Session II Training Session of the New Leader Program at the most recent session in November 2014.

Here are some comments from the participants on what they have learned or developed while in the program:

Self-Awareness

"I have learned a lot about myself and my management style by means of assessment instruments such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), Leadership Effectiveness Inventory (LEI), and the Thomas Kilmann Inventory (TKI). I believe that what I learned from this program today will help me to be a successful leader in the future.

"The New Leader Program has educated me on the Executive Core Qualifications and given me a venue in which I am able to explore, practice, and learn about their uses. It is through this program that I was given a rare chance to see anonymous unbiased opinions of how my peers, subordinates, and superiors view me as a person and the work that I do. What a powerful tool for enriching awareness and enhancing skills. I am excited to see where the path takes me.

"...I can recognize some areas that I can build upon to, hopefully, become a more successful leader as I go forward in my career."

Continued, see NLP on page 13.

NLP from page 12

“I believe that becoming a successful leader requires reflecting on my own personal strengths and weaknesses to allow myself to grow, while also serving as a model for other future leaders.”

Networking

“I have gotten to expand my network of colleagues throughout both FGIS and P&S. I hope to get the opportunity to utilize these networks for future endeavors.”

“For me, the content of the assignments were almost irrelevant. It was about the contacts made in the completion of them that really mattered.”

“I got a chance to interview ... some very influential people and learned that there are often methods and tactics to every decision or action made. Being a leader isn't just making decisions – but understanding how those decisions are a ripple pool and seeing how they fit into the bigger picture.”

“I enjoyed being able to travel within FGIS, networking with individuals from other government agencies and collaborating and working with GIPSA employees.”

Leadership Experience

Getting a chance to work with teammates from different agencies:

- Department of Energy
- Department of Defense
- State Department
- National Science Foundation
- Department of Agriculture – Forest Service
- Department of Homeland Security
- U.S. Navy
- Pre-trial Services Agency
- Food and Drug Administration

“I was lucky to be chosen to represent GIPSA in the New Leader Program 2014-2015, for grades 7 – 11. Eight employees from Grain Inspection and two employees from Packers and Stockyards started the leadership program in Chesapeake, Virginia, on August 6th. Since that time we have presented reports on books that we have read, written reports after we interviewed public officials, made plans for our 30-day leadership detail and 3-day job shadow, and attended the 2nd leadership training in Newport News, Virginia, the week of November 16th. Our program ends the week of February 6th when we travel to Timonium, Maryland and present a team skit on leadership competencies we have concentrated on for our leadership development skills.

“I am honored to be a member of the 2014 New Leader Program. This program has taught me the skills and traits of effective leadership and communication. The New Leadership Program is very demanding and filled with many tasks and opportunities that promote professional development; however, the outcome is very rewarding if you put forth effort. I encourage everyone to get involved with the many programs and opportunities that the agency offers to begin their journey to become an effective leader.”

For further questions about the New Leader Program, you may want to follow-up with any of the participants or contact: caroline.c.thorpe@usda.gov, GIPSA's Training Officer.

2014 : USDA's Year of Action, Partnership and Innovation



United States Department of Agriculture

2014: USDA's Year of Action, Partnership and Innovation

Some Examples:



Action:

Led what has widely been called "the most successful Farm Bill implementation."

Achieved a record \$152.5 billion in farm exports that supported 1 million jobs in the United States.

- Moved more than \$4.2 billion in critical disaster assistance to thousands of producers.
- Helped 146,000 rural Americans become first-time home buyers.
- Served more than 187 million summer meals to low-income kids, an increase of 14% since 2009.
- Provided more than 3,500 microloans to help beginning and veteran farmers grow their businesses.
- Made 340 investments in local food infrastructure to help connect farmers and consumers and create jobs in rural America.
- Answered nearly 1.3 million questions to help consumers stay food safe.
- Increased the hiring of minority employees by 83% in the past year to support a USDA workforce that is diverse, inclusive and reflective of the public we serve.



Partnership:

Hosted the first-ever Rural Opportunity Investment Conference that brought leaders from the highest levels of business together with rural economic developers.

- Announced an unprecedented \$10 billion rural infrastructure investment fund with CoBank.
- Launched the Regional Conservation Partnership Program, a ground-breaking approach to conservation investment that leverages regional, private sector and foundation resources into high-impact projects.
- Established a \$150 million Rural Business Investment Company that allows private funders to make equity investments in rural businesses.



Innovation

Filed 109 patent applications and received 78 patents in 2014.

Created a new Foundation for Food and Agricultural Research to leverage public and private resources to boost agricultural innovation and research.

- Established seven regional Climate Hubs and three sub-hubs to help producers connect research with on-the-ground action to mitigate the risks of climate change.
- Facilitated the purchase of third-party verified carbon credits generated on working ranch grasslands by Chevrolet. The amount of carbon dioxide removed from the atmosphere is equivalent to taking more than 5,000 cars off the road.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)

(800) 222-0364

(888) 262-7848 (TTY)

<http://www.FOH4You.com>

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**Issuance Report**

Terri Henry, Washington, DC

****Negative Report******Have an idea?**

**Then fill out your change request
available at *inGIPSA* and email it to:
FGIS-CCWG@usda.gov**

Training Updates

Caroline Thorpe, Washington, DC

Mandatory Training Due

Course	Due Date	Trainees
Civil Rights: No Fear Act Comprehensive	Within 30 days of hiring (USDA)	New Employees (About 50 Employees need to complete-Report was run and offices notified)
Civil Rights: Reasonable Accommodation For the Federal Workforce	December 15, 2014 (Past due)	All employees (95 Employees are incomplete)
Cultural Transformation: Maximizing Employee Engagement	September 30, 2015	All Supervisors, Managers, and Executives
CyberSecurity: FY2015 Informational Security Awareness	March 31, 2015	All Employees
LincPass Training	December 15, 2014 (Past due)	All Employees w/computer access (164 employees are incomplete)
Performance Training: Performance Management in USDA. The Course Performance Management in MRP was replaced by this course.	<u>Due: May 15, 2015</u>	All Employees whose Performance Training was incomplete for FY2014 due to technical issues (239 Employees and 26 Supervisors need to complete)
Safety Course: General Security and Situational Awareness Training in AgLearn	October 15, 2014 (<i>Past due</i>)	All Employees (69 Incomplete)
Safety-New Course: Active Shooter: What You Can Do. This is on AgLearn and replaces the Youtube video.	April 30, 2015	All Employees

Training and Development Tools in a Nutshell from USDA and GIPSA

If you're not in an organized development program, what options and tools do you have to move forward in your career? Below is a standard list of ongoing resources employees may use to identify career moves and make sure they take the next step.

1) Identifying next steps based on job series: Considering a move in your current government series or to another series. First look at your own Position Description and also find the series on OPM's website for the next grade higher. Carefully review the documents to clearly identify associated competencies and review this with someone in your office on what those skills are. For those in FGIS that do grain grading you may want go to the *InGIPSA* website at <https://ingipsa.gipsa.usda.gov/training.aspx> and under "steer your career" click on Career Information for ACGs, ACTs, and ACAs.

2) Goal Setting: Individual Development Plans (IDPs) - Set developmental and training goals using your IDP and follow through. It is easy to identify activities but often the issue is executing or following-up on those plans. See if you can commit to a trusted friend to verify if you are following up on your developmental or training goals whether they are on your IDP (job related and organizational) or personal goals (financial, health, career or personal (house, family hobby). Further, the Department will be rolling out a coaching program over the next year. Initially this will probably be open to those in leadership training programs. Coaching, is a teaching, training or development process via which an individual is supported while achieving a specific personal or professional result or goal. As a result, the coach often asks a lot of questions to clarify next moves that help the coaches identify their next best moves. This is for usually a short duration less than six months. The object here is to meet to move forward with your goals, ideally to become a more engaged employee.

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3) Mentoring: Some of you may participate formally and others may opt out of the formal process and do this informally (finding someone with the skills you want and simply talking with them). Either way, this is a great opportunity for you to get information on both the technical skills or soft skills or career development of an employee. Mentoring is defined as an individual who facilitates personal and professional growth by sharing knowledge and insights learned through the years. The assumption is that, unlike coaching, the mentor has some form of information or advice needed by the mentee.

4) Developmental Opportunities: With support and assistance of the supervisor, the employee's present job can be restructured or arrangements made to have the employee temporarily transferred to another area to learn firsthand the necessary technical and managerial competencies required for effective performance in that job.

Examples of developmental activities include the following list:

- **Shadowing:** Providing a trainee or learner with the opportunity to observe a well qualified, journeyman level employee perform a particular skill. Immediately after the shadowing period, the learner needs to have the opportunity to perform the same skill and be given feedback on that performance.
- **Detail/Rotational Assignments:** Short-term assignment particularly appropriate for important skills that make up a small portion of an individual's job, but can lead to full-time work in that field.
- **Task Force Assignments:** This is particularly effective if the learner has an opportunity to work with well qualified people who will provide feedback to the learner on his/her performance and participation in the group.

5) Development of Job Aides: Requires that the learner develop a product that will assist in the performance of the job, while, at the same time, serving as a vehicle for learning job-related information.

- Cross-Program Assignments
- Special Work Projects
- Coaching Lower Level Employees

6) Finally, Communication, Communication, Communication: Studies show that one skill clearly associated with job success and leadership is communication. Consider taking courses on AgLearn to strengthen both written and oral communication. If you want to enter leadership polish your briefing skills by joining Toastmasters, which is only about \$50 per year. See if you can find someone in your office who writes well and may be able to work with you on a basic writing program.

Many of these items are not new, but reviewing what is available now since you completed your IDP may be of value if you feel the need to adjust your activities throughout the year.

Are EEO/CR issues or concerns affecting your employment with GIPSA?

Do you have questions?

Need help?

Then let your voice be heard.

Call the Civil Rights Staff at 202-690-3640



GIPSA News is the employee newsletter of the USDA Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration. Send your news, ideas, suggestions, comments, questions, or thoughts for the next issue to:

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